# Zambia: Mediation and the Transformation of the Lunda-Luvale Conflict

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**Abstract.** *This article is an attempt to examine the intervention efforts in a conflict between the Lundas and Luvales in Zambia's north-western region. The two ethnic groups on the eastern and western banks of the Zambezi River respectively have a longstanding ethnic acrimony since the 1950s. Based on the analysis of existing scholarly works and electronic media sources, the study, mainly desktop, looks at why transformative mediation is recommended than other forms of mediation. The article finds that since 2009, the government of the republic of Zambia has made several attempts to try and resolve the Lunda-Luvale conflict but very little progress has been made. While there are several official interventions, these are often top-down and problem-solving oriented. In October 2015, a special task committee constituted by Zambia's Head of State is collecting data in the Lunda and Luvale areas of Northwestern Zambia with the aim to making recommendations for 'resolving the conflict'. The study has also advanced cases for the appreciation of mediation through transformative lens, an approach that seeks to transform people and not just situations. Several intermediaries who can contribute to this transformation in the Lunda-Luvale conflict are suggested.*

**Keywords:** *Ethnic Conflict, Transformative Mediation, Empowerment, Recognition.*

## Introduction

The Lundas and Luvales are among the three main ethnic groups in Zambia's north-western region with populations standing at 34.5% and 16.5% with Kaondes at 26.9% respectively of the total regional population (Central Statistical Office, 2012). According to the 2010 census, the North Western province has the smallest population: 706,462 (males 345,025; females 361,437), living in an area of 125,826 km$^2$ and is the most sparsely populated (CSO, 2012). The Lunda and Luvale ethnic groups on the eastern and western banks of Zambezi River have

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historically been involved in one form of economic activity or the other. The Luvales have been fishermen as early as 1940, exporting tonnes of dried fish to the Copperbelt regions of Zambia. On the other hand, the Lundas, with no interest in fishing, opted for hunting and settled on the once game-rich forests on the eastern bank of the Zambezi (Papstein, 1989).

Aside from clearly preferred economic activities, Papstein (1989) believes no social, political or structural element should push these two ethnic groups into conflict. Instead, they should relate as brothers and sisters. Alas, they have had a longstanding ethnic rancour since the 1950s. The latest case of conflict between the two groups was in early 2015, when the group's two senior chiefs, Ishindi and Ndungu, differed over the use of Luvale and Lunda languages in schools under each other jurisdiction. This dispute not only brings to the fore an ethnically deep-rooted conflict, but facilitate third party interventions, a common occurrence in this decades-long conflict.

The primary focus of this paper is to examine the type of interventions that has happened thus far and who have been the intermediaries. Further, have institutions such as the Council of Chiefs made any contribution to ameliorating the situation? And after an evaluation of the various interventions, the article proposes mediation as a more appropriate approach that would culminate into a true transformation of the conflict. The application of mediation allows for the clarification of issues between the parties and above all, helps cultivate an atmosphere that would eventually make it possible for non-adversarial encounters. However, before delving into this exploration, it's imperative to unearth the historical grounds of the Lunda-Luvale conflict.

## Historical Premises

Beyond the language argument between the two senior chiefs, there are undoubtedly other issues that continue to remain bones of contention between the two ethnic groups. There are, for example, contextual, historical and relational factors that warrant examination. I contend that no discussion of ethnically related conflict is complete without particular reference to the role that colonialism and its perpetrators played in sowing the seeds of conflict. Commentators on ethnicity vis-à-vis conflicts and violence have highlighted its correlation with colonial actors or colonial practices (Ake, 1993; Blanton, Mason & Athow, 2001; Papstein, 1989). And, the Lunda-Luvale conflict is no exception.

One would be deceived by the creation of the 'Lunda and Luvale Native Authorities' in the 1940s as structures that may have helped in ameliorating the differences between the two ethnic groups through dialogue. Regrettably, as Papstein (1989) notes, the two structural arrangements were without serious influence in decision or policy making. It is noted that, while the architects of these structures viewed them as 'institutions of modernization', their inception encouraged or forced people to seek solutions to local problems through traditional tribal structures (Papstein, 1989, p. 384). Therefore, it

is this entrenchment in tribal fall-backs that, I believe, has allowed the perpetuation of the Lunda-Luvale conflict until today. Undoubtedly, the [mis] handling of the political structures has had a decisive effect on relations between the two groups since time immemorial. Other commentators have claimed that "structural configuration of ethnic groups has a direct and profound effect on the willingness and ability of groups to mobilize for collective action" (Blanton, Mason & Athow, 2001, p. 475).

I have qualified the Lunda-Luvale differences as ethnic, on the basis of Vanhanen (1999)'s proposition. He argues that ethnic groups can be perceived as extended kin groups where members of one group favour and support their group members rather than those from the other group in a conflict situation. As illustrated later, between the Lundas and Luvales there has been what Vanhanen calls support of one kin and not of a non-kin. The propensity for this support, argues Papstein (1989), is historical. Among the Lunda-Luvales, there was a change in perceptions: the village, lineage or clan were no longer the protectors and facilitators of access to land, fishing and hunting rights, healing, social recognition and economic advancement. This role was played by larger polities, such as chief and tribe.

In his essay about the development tribalism between the Luvale and Lunda speaking people, Papstein (1989) reports that, within the realm of local politics, tribalism was so intensified in the 1940s and 1950s to a point whereby a state of emergency had to be declared in Zambezi District. One aspect that merits emphasizing is that intensified tribalism was solely driven by the Lundas and Luvales; colonial administrators, as was the case in other parts of Zambia, had an interest in indigenous structures. However, as Ake (1993) notes, their influence was negative to the point of altering power relations within traditional power structures and among ethnic groups, triggering severe political competition. The Lunda-Luvale differences were not any different.

The colonial state, according to Papstein (1989), encouraged the creation of tribal groups in rural settings, with the ultimate objective of utilizing these groups in urban industries. Aside from aiding local people's with official legal recognition and access to economic opportunities in town, these alignments were a source of conflict, especially where colonial actors favoured one group against another, based on their presumed abilities. For example, colonial states invented such categories as the 'clever Bemba or Lozi' and the 'backward and wild' Luvale or Lamba'. Such classification had (has) the potential to pit one ethnic group against another, especially in as far as political, social and economic opportunities mattered.

This had nothing to do with the Lunda and Luvales before colonial contact. In other words, the subjugation that one group may have suffered at the hands of another had no precolonial roots. The systematic and large-scale enslavement of Lunda people by Luvale chiefs and the 'big men', notes Papstein (1989), was less an indication of some ancient ethnic animosity. It was rather an acknowledgement, in a new situation cre-

ated by merchant capitalists, of the abilities of the powerful over the powerless. This also culminated into what is called "cultural division of labour, a pattern of structural discrimination such that individuals are assigned to specific types of occupations and other social roles on the basis of observable cultural traits or markers" (Blanton *et al*. 2001, p. 475).

While this cultural division of labour may culminate into political mobilization and ultimately to social or political strife, other commentators think differently. Posner (2004), for example, argues that, "mere presence of cultural differences cannot possibly be a sufficient condition for the emergence of political or social strife, for there are far more cultural cleavages in the world than there are conflicts" (p. 529). Conversely, some claim that Lundas and Luvales elsewhere in Zambia continue to co-exist and support each other during traditional ceremonies (Mupushi, 2010). Despite that, accentuated Lunda-Luvale cultural differences tend to keep the conflict active.

A personal experience of the myth around the cultural division of labour revealed that people from North-Western part of Zambia, especially the 'kaluvales and kalundas' were favourably suited to do certain menial jobs. Papstein (1989) notes that the Lunda and Luvale were lowly identified ethnically in town. This made it hard for them to find jobs and served as a basis for more long-term social difficulties. At the time of Zambia's independence, in 1964, while there were problems between the Lunda and Luvales, there were also issues between these two ethnic groups and other ethnically defined groups in terms of choices of positions within certain sectors of the economy (Papstein, 1989, p. 382). Latter differences have persisted, traversing political social and economic spheres.

There have been calls, for example, to review boundaries between the two chiefdoms. In 2010, a High Court ruling decreed that the Zambezi River will be the boundary between the Lunda on the east and the Luvale on the west and ensuring all their activities fall with that boundary (Mupushi, 2010). Both senior chiefs Ndungu (of the Luvale) and Ishindi (of the Lunda) were directed to support the directive by advising their subjects to heed the Court ruling. Equally, there have been calls for an analysis of the location of social infrastructures such as schools in Zambezi District, east or west banks of the river.

In sum, ethnic politics, according to Papstein (1989), became fully fledged in the late 1940s. They were helped by governments granting of schools in Luvale areas to teach in Luvale and schools in Lunda areas in Lunda – this resonates with the current differences. And by 1950, adds Papstein, the tension had permeated every facet of their lives, evident in such actions as Lundas boycotting Luvale traders. Additionally, travels in one another's areas were a matter of serious insecurity. Therefore, the current differences between the two ethnic groups cannot be viewed narrowly as only being rooted in the use of either Lunda or Luvale languages, but as an intertwining of several aspects that demand consideration when conceiving third party intervention strategies. Hence, the

rationale for exploring third party intervention approaches employed in the Lunda-Luvale conflict.

**Third Party Intervention**

A third party may intervene in a conflict formally or informally and provide direction, assist in preventing the escalation of the conflict, and/or resolve substantive issues between the parties. Alternatively, a third party may aid the process of negotiation to allow parties to transform every facet of their conflict. Fisher (2001, p. ii) provides a more helpful description of third party intervention:

> … a typical response to destructive and persistent social conflict and comes in a number of different forms attended by a variety of issues. Mediation is a common form of intervention designed to facilitate a negotiated settlement on substantive issues between conflicting parties. Mediators are usually external to the parties and carry an identity, motives and competencies required to play a useful role in addressing the dispute.

Lederach (2003) has, on the other hand, identified four critical changes that a conflict engenders. These changes are personal, relational, structural and cultural. One of the key issues in third party intervention concerns the extent to which the approach employed creates space for the parties to decide and agree on how their conflict will be resolved or transformed. Further, how much attention is accorded to each of these four elements? Or are all these aspects collectively dealt with? As its pioneer and promoter, Lederach argues these four 'legs', collectively, give birth to conflict transformation. I will later delve into the implementation of these aspects.

Stakeholders and participants in the Lunda-Luvale conflict have been open to third party intervention. Since 2009, the government of the republic of Zambia has made several attempts to try and resolve the conflict, but very little progress has been made. In 2010, one of the senior chiefs, Chief Ndungu of the Luvale people, implored the government to intervene in the conflict. The senior chief alleged then that governments silence was exacerbating the differences. There was an assurance from the government then that the conflict would be resolved (Mupushi, 2010). My contention is that third party intervention in the Lunda-Luvale conflict has been heavily tilted towards conflict resolution, which suggests dealing only with tangible aspects of the conflict, including access to land or location of social infrastructure like schools. In other words, appreciation of intangible factors such as respect, recognition and identity etc. is seemingly not taken into consideration.

In the quest to 'resolve' the Lunda-Luvale' conflict, several third party interventions have been used, and from a peace and conflict studies standpoint, these have covered essential conflict resolution approaches including adjudication, arbitration, negotiation, and mediation. As noted earlier, a case in point is the judicial approach to resolve part

of this conflict through High Court rulings regarding the boundary between the areas inhabited by the two ethnic groups. Further, as part of their efforts to contribute to ameliorating the situation, the Lunda Cultural Associations has made appeals for lasting peace between the two groups. Similarly in 2015, the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs launched its own intervention by first undertaking a baseline exercise to identify background information on the conflict from each of the two ethnic groups. A more recent intervention is being performed through a special committee tasked to engage, among others, the two senior chiefs, and all discussion are kept secret till a report is handed to the Republican President, later this year (Nyondo, 2015).

However, the fact that this particular third party intervention is 'top down' and interve-nors acknowledge that the Lunda-Luvale Conflict is historical may demand more than just interviewing a few select individuals. Through the work of the special committee and many other efforts conceived chiefly to 'resolve' the conflict, the orientation in my view, is settlement or problem solving. As such, while efforts are noble, the interventions may not be transformative. Lederach (2003) aptly argues that conflict transformation views peace as embedded in the quality of relationships, face to face interactions and the manner in which social, political, economic and cultural relationships are structured.

Different intermediary approaches have distinct effects on the conflict change and transformation. For example, a parliamentary committee on Education, Science and Technology that visited Zambezi District in 2013 reported that one of the senior chief representatives claimed the idea to use Lunda in the east and Luvale in the west was the best. However, government's insisting on using both languages on both sides was unwelcome (Kalila, 2013). Thus, official intervention through government-appointed committee may not have positive outcomes as far as transforming relations between the two ethnic groups. At the risk of sounding pessimistic, 'a pointed and exclusive' focus may not yield favourable results depending on the breadth of participants and their respective constituencies.

As Lederach (2003) advances, the attainment of peace hinges to a great extent on the relationships cultivated – socially, politically, economically and culturally. For example, if the official state interventions are politically inclined, then other aspects, supposedly given attention, may serve as triggers for new and future conflicts. As political aspects of the conflict are 'resolved', it is essential to pay particular attention to other aspects too. Zartman (2000, p. 255) confirms that "a perceived collective need that is denied is the basic condition for conflict". He adds that the grievances cover a broad range, from freedom from political subjugation to economic deprivation immunity. Thus, if any of these often imperceptible elements are devoid of due consideration, transformation of the conflict may remain doubtful.

Currently, in my view, no third party intervention is oriented towards transforming this conflict. Put differently, there is need to ensure that personal (interpersonal relations),

relational, structural and cultural dimensions of the differences between the two ethnic groups are comprehensively handled. It sounds like a tall order, but the next section will postulate how this can be attained and especially who should respond to specific angles of the whole transformation paradigm.

**Transformation Of Lunda-Luvale Conflict**

While the common vocabulary is suggesting completely extinguishing the differences between the Lundas and Luvales, I propose the transformation of the conflict through the use of mediation. Mediation is one of the third party intervention approaches by an independent and acceptable participant to both disputing parties. It is defined as 'an intervention of a third party in conflict who has limited (or no) authoritative decision making power; aimed at achieving mutually satisfactory outcome through reconciliation, empowerment healing, peace and justice and ultimately strengthening relationships, encouraging trust and respect between parties (Assefa, 2001; Moore, 2003; Jeong, 2010; Harper, 2006; Bannink, 2007).

Despite the seemingly holistic and comprehensive description of mediation above, the approach advocated here is not just settlement or problem solving oriented but transformative. Transformative mediation, according to its proponents, is a third party intervention style that seeks to empower the parties in a conflict as well as encouraging them to recognize each other's point of view (Folger & Barush Bush, 2014). It is also an intervention mechanism that aims to transform the relationship between the disputing parties. In the case of Lunda-Luvale conflict, the approach must be employed across all the four key players – the church; cultural associations; government ministries and the scholarly community.

Mediating transformatively across these sectors would, I believe, comprehensively enhance the chances of transforming the conflict as opposed to leaving the intermediary role to state actors only. Besides, Lederach (2003) presents a fourfold change that a conflict begets and no one intervenor would unilaterally handle all these areas. First, at a personal level, the call is to reduce the destructive consequences and scale up the potential for individual growth physically, emotionally and spiritually. This dimension would be handled ably by the church leadership and counsellors. Second, relationally, transforming the Lunda-Luvale conflict, as Lederach, suggests, entails evaluating how the patterns of communication and interaction have been affected by the conflict. There is a need to go beyond visible issues (more the domain of conflict resolution) to underlying intangible aspects, as emphasized above. This can be handled, in addition to the church, by cultural associations and local and indigenous institutions.

Structurally, conflict changes suggest that would be intervenors should assess social conditions that serve as triggers of conflict as well as the effects conflict has on existing structures and decision-making patterns. The government, through the Ministry of

Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, should take up this responsibility and ensure any policy measures address this ailment. Last, cultural changes brought about by conflict call for, according to Lederach (2003), "helping those in conflict to understand the cultural patterns that contribute to conflict in their setting". Thereafter, "identify, promote, and build on resources and mechanisms within that culture for constructively responding to and handling conflict" (p. 26). The synergies of the scholarly community and the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs can assist in filling this void.

However, the key question still remains: how transformative mediation can practically be realized by the four key players individually or collectively. First, *the Church,* through their various national, regional and local structures, enjoys national recognition and intervening in this conflict would equally be valued. It may be said, ethnic conflicts are internal matters in which mediation may be perceived as meddling (Zartman, 2000). But the churches, through their small Christian Communities, can and does have almost daily interactions with members of the Lunda and Luvale ethnic groups. As such, facilitating dialogue at this level between the two groups is in my view very feasible. I contend that the degree of cooperation by these groups is higher when drawn together by the church than when called by other social entities.

Besides, the church's involvement, through its leaders as mediators, will circumvent the limitation of the parties' asymmetry (Kriesberg, 2001). As noted earlier, the lopsidedness between the Lundas and Luvales is a familiar accusation and counter accusation. The church has comparatively more leverage, for example, to engage traditional leaders, such as headmen (custodians of tradition and order), to assess whether the continuing conflict is going against the traditional norms. Additionally, a mediator is expected "to block the impending or escalating conflict, drawing parties from hostile perceptions and actions and bring them together in a more harmonious relationship" (Zartman, 2001, p. 264). Leaders from churches can ably play this role.

Second, *cultural associations and local/indigenous associations,* such as the Lunda and Luvale Cultural Associations, should equally be part of the transformation process. Members from these structures can participate in the mediation process at all the three levels – top, middle and lower. At the top or national level, they can represent their constituencies; serve as resources and participants at middle level during problem-solving workshops and facilitate village level inter-clan mediation processes.

The latter may also include inter-ethnic engagements at the village level, ensuring representatives of these two ethnic groups are empowered to handle their differences amicably. This multi-layered contribution to the transformation of the conflict may not be unique to north-western region of Zambia, as mediation is described as both top-down and bottom-up. Mars (2001), looking at the Guyanese experience of Ethnic Politics, Mediation and Conflict Resolution, argues that the top-down part, a formal type of mediation, involves official entities such as states, international institutions

and upper-class personalities, while the bottom-up mediation includes lower class or mass organizations, local communities, civil society elements and groups neglected in the political process.

Third, the *government* has a bigger role in ensuring a lasting solution is found to the Lunda-Luvale conflict. As front runners, the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs should, as part of their preliminary intervention in the conflict, proactively gain insight "into the underlying causes and social conditions which create and foster violent expression of conflict" (Lederach, 2003, p. 25). There is need to do away with the myth that lack of development is caused by ethnic strife and antagonism, a myth which discouraged the central government from investing in an area where the propensity for conflict is high and may hinder the success of any project (Papstein, 1989). An environment where both parties do not feel deprived of their social and economic needs should be created.

Conversely, any disparities in the allocation of social infrastructure should transparently be explained to affected communities, thereby preventing claims of relative deprivation. As a source of conflict, relative deprivation is aptly described as resulting from "the combined effect of rising expectations and lack of progress toward demands for a better life. Relative deprivation is defined as actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations lead people to believe that they are rightfully entitled to certain goods and conditions of life" (Jeong, 2000, p. 69). Claims from the Lundas and Luvales are not devoid of claims of relative deprivations. For example, in 2010, there was a debate over who should have access to and control Zambezi Central Administration area, which is state land (Mupushi, 2010).

Last, the *scholarly community* is another critical player in the transformation of the Lunda-Luvale conflict. One of the dilemmas of transformational view of conflict is how to develop a capacity for what Lederach (2003, p. 20) calls "constructive, direct, face to face interaction and at the same time, addressing systemic and structural changes". The scholarly community is well poised to collaborate with government agencies and cultural associations to aid this capacity building. Through various scholarly interventions including research and publications, this particular community can serve as a valuable resource in the actualization of transformative mediation. Similarly, the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, the cultural associations or any special committee constituted by the state can utilize the expertise from the scholarly community to enhance the skill sets of their own constituencies.

In addition, transformative mediation is anchored on a shift from destructive to constructive interaction between the parties. This implies a transformative effect on individuals and society due to its emphasis on empowerment and personal responsibility, rather than achieving a specific outcome. It also aims to reduce the negative force of anger and hatred, which is always harmful and more often than not disrupts one's ability to deal with diversity constructively. This according to Daly and Higgins (2011),

enables parties to cultivate a sense of compassion and responsibility. Thus, alongside the church leaders and leaders from cultural associations, the scholarly community has the technical acumen to bring this sort of mediation to the fore, to a point where the other stakeholders benefit from such input.

All things considered, involving all four key players in the transformation of the Lunda-Luvale conflict means that the style of mediation advocated is 'party centred. Arguably, no big powers, say the government, can impose an agreement or outcome. The parties should willingly engage in negotiations and formulate their own boundaries for any agreement (Kriesberg, 2001). In Kriesberg's view, no single mediation method is completely adequate; a combination of approaches is necessary, either simultaneously or sequentially. Similarly, several intermediaries, operating at different levels, are necessary. This, adds Kriesberg, assists in ensuring that peace-making is not just top-down, but also bottom-up. As such, the transformation of the Lunda-Luvale Conflict in North-western Zambia must be multidimensional and multisectoral. This is the core thesis of this paper.

**Cost of Failed Transformation**

It is asserted that, "the process of mediation needs to address the parties' grievances, both substantive and procedural, in an effort to identify difficult compromises and compensations. Once that is done, it must focus on setting up mechanisms for handling future grievances that may arise" (Zartman, 2000, p. 264). Thus, if the Lunda-Luvale conflict is partially transformed or not at all, there are in my view, consequences of this outcome which I call opportunity costs. And there are sections of society that may ultimately end up bearing the greatest brunt. The opportunity costs that can be envisaged are fourfold, *polarized community relations*; *disruption of social infrastructure development*; *the spillover effect*; and *possibility of future violent engagement.*

The failure to transform the current conflict between the Lunda and Luvales has the potential to further polarize relations between the two communities and to take on a destructive path. This will, in turn, contribute to the crystallization of ethnic divisions and stratifications, which would make co-existence harder and could lead to the erosion of the traditional bonds of community. It will sadly reinforce the disruption of institutions of social control and social organization that have evolved over centuries, but were transformed by colonial administrators. Papstein (1989) has noted the negative effects of ethnic or tribal differences between the Lundas and Luvale. He claims they "face the dilemma of wanting to know and be proud of their local history, and to show both to succeeding generations and to the world at large how they have evolved as a society" (p. 389). Thus, a breakdown in the mediation process and transformation of the conflict will in a way heighten this dilemma.

Second, failed transformation will have a bearing on social infrastructure development. In 2010, a government minister's appeal for the 'resolution of the Lunda-Luvale conflict'

greatly hinged on the need to avoid derailing developmental projects in the region. Historically, the same concern has been raised, as one authority notes that "the major locally perceived reason why the issue [conflict] must be settled is that this would be a first step toward economic development" (Papstein, 1989, p. 387). This development that would lead to better schools and medical services and the creation of an infra-structure which would allow local farmers and fishermen greater participation in the national economy (ibid). In the same direction, others have argued that

> "… ethnic communities may remain passive and unmobilized for long periods. The salience of group identity is awakened by socially derived inequalities in material well-being or political access. Racial or ethnic distinctions are deepened by the denial of political participation as well as a lack of physical and economic security (Jeong, 2000, p. 72).

Third, the failure to transform the Lunda-Luvale conflict has a spill-over effect to other cities and towns inhabited by members of the two ethnic groups. As noted above, a government minister claimed that the conflict between the two ethnic groups has the potential to degenerate into a national conflict. Even if inter-ethnic conflicts are seem-ingly local, they can swiftly gain national character, either politically or socially, due to national interest from citizens sharing the same ethnic identity. And I contend that the core threat to peace may not be so much from animosities between primary eth-nic groups, but more from proxies in urban cities. When these proxies make available financial, material and political assistance to players involved in the local struggles, ethnic conflicts invariably escalate. Therefore, the need to transform the conflict at the local level is evident.

Last, there is potential for future violent confrontation if the Lunda-Luvale conflict is not transformed. The failure to transform the conflict now can potentially slip into serious future violent engagements. Lederach (1992) observes that differences over specific problems get translated into accusations against the other party and inferences about their character, intentions and motives. Instead of focusing on the problem between them, parties view the other party as the problem. This degree of escalation is often attributed to poor or destructive communication or interaction. As one scholar argues:

> … communication and interaction are necessary ingredients in any attempt to end conflict and prevent its future occurrences. Left to themselves, ethnic communities are bound to retreat into their own myths and histories, develop and exclusivist creed, and be quick to take umbrage at any perceived slight. Hence, dialogue can-not be permitted to cease (Zartman, 2000, p. 265).

A key lesson from Zartman's observations is that third party intervention efforts, par-ticularly mediation initiatives, in north-western Zambia between the Lundas and Luvales should not cease. As argued earlier, the failure to transform the conflict now or in the future will be a severe blow to the quest to quell any possible eruption of violent conflict.

Additionally, transformation of this conflict has both social and economic development dividends for the region and the country as a whole.

## Conclusion

What I have attempted to discuss in this essay is first, my argument that the issues in the Lunda-Luvale conflict are not just contemporary but historical. Second, the handling of the conflict by the different players should be less inclined to mediate the substantive issues in the conflict and instead lean towards transforming relations between the parties. Not only is conflict transformation linked to relational dimensions of the conflict, but also to personal, structural and cultural dimensions. Fundamentally, attention should be paid to the changes that the conflict provokes.

To comprehensively transform the conflict and respond to its various dimensions, a myriad of key stakeholders should play the intermediary role. These include the church leaders; cultural associations and indigenous organizations; government agencies - ministry of chiefs and traditional affairs - and the scholarly committee. It is undoubtedly clear that there are costs to the failure to transform the Lunda-Luvale conflict. These include polarizing relations; slowing down the development of social infrastructure; spill over effect onto other cities and towns and potential for future violent engagement.

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